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A VINDICATION

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OF

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA,

FROM A RECENT ATTACK

IN THE

QUARTERLY REVIEW.

BY JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M.A.

"Nothing can be more unfair than the manner in which the scoffers have represented the missionaries... The plan which they have laid for their proceedings, is perfectly prudent and unexceptionable.... A plain statement of the fact will be the best proof of their success."

QUARTERLY REVIEW, VOL. I. pp. 224, 225.

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## A VINDICATION

OF

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA.

FEW things can be more surprising, even in this age of wonders, than an attack on missions\* from the Quarterly Review. To say nothing of a very recent article† in which these exertions of christian benevolence are spoken of, generally and individually, in the kindest terms, the public cannot yet have forgotten how much honour this journal did itself, by a noble stand on their behalf at the very commencement of its labours;‡ when it vindicated, more especially, the missionaries at Serampore, who have now most strangely, without any alteration on their part, become the most prominent, but not the sole objects of its hostility. To the paper we have mentioned, though far from being in all respects complimentary or correct, we can cheerfully refer every one who wishes to know the true character of the baptist missions to the east, or to find a reply to their present assailant; a purpose for which we shall shortly have the pleasure of making some pointed and decisive extracts.

In the mean time, it is by no means difficult to discern the motive of this assault. It is manifestly subservient to the exaltation of the church establishment in India, “from which,” says the writer, “we have better hope, than from all the missions that have hitherto been sent to that quarter.”§ Now whatever

\* No. lxxv. Art. American Mission to the Burmans.

† No. lxxiii.

‡ Vol. I. p. 193.

§ P. 41. We merely beg to annex to this statement the following extracts, with an inquiry, *which* of its opinions the readers of this journal are to receive?—“It is highly desirable that there should be” “a church establishment for India.” “But would the archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters,



we may think of the church establishment itself, or of its adaptation to missionary agency, we are far from being disposed to complain of a churchman for thinking highly of it, or for speaking as he thinks. It is unquestionably to the honour of the church of England to have paid some attention, at length, to the spiritual wants of her nominal members in India; and we are happy in expressing our most cordial concurrence in the just eulogy pronounced on the present bishop of Calcutta, under whose auspices, or any other, we shall sincerely rejoice in beholding her increasing usefulness. Not a doubt can be entertained that she possesses ample resources, which require only to be wisely and vigorously employed, in order to be productive of the most extensive benefits. Her entrance on this course of beneficent exertion we hail with unfeigned delight; and if, in the brightening glories of her progress, her real utility should transcend that of other labourers, not excepting even the baptist missionaries at Serampore, we shall feel unmingled joy in her splendour. But we see no reason why the high esteem bestowed for one body of christians, should be connected with the depreciation of others. We cannot for a moment suppose, that unfair comparisons and false assertions are necessary, to shew the superiority of the church of England to all other religious communities. It cannot be true that the only way to secure her existence, is to put all the others to death; or that she has no chance of shining, till every other light is extinguished. To depreciate others for her exaltation, therefore, is altogether unnecessary; and it is as dishonourable as it is needless. We are happy to add, too, that this is not

do the work of missionaries? . . . There is ability, and there is learning in the church of England, but its age of fermentation has long been over; and that zeal which for this work is the most needful, is, we fear, possessed only by the methodists." "Let it not be deemed that this is spoken disrespectfully. Far from depreciating church establishments, our wish and desire is, that they may be extended:—let there be one in India, the more magnificent the better; but do not think, even if this were done, to supersede the baptist missionaries."—Quarterly Review, Vol. I. pp. 220, 225.



the way in which missionary societies have been usually treated by her members. No small number of them have felt that, whatever greater results might be expected from the official movements of the hierarchy itself, it is quite right that the effects of voluntary exertion should not be lost; and that every well intended and well directed endeavour for the diffusion of christianity, is entitled to their approbation and encouragement. Many of the most generous supporters of the several missions, and of the baptist mission at Serampore especially, are found accordingly among the clergy and laity of the establishment. We gratefully renew our acknowledgments for their aid; and are assured that they have no sympathy with the hostility which is now directed against these noble charities. Indeed we are persuaded that there are very few whom this article will not fill with astonishment and indignation.

While we thus joyfully acquit the church of England, and its members generally, of whom this nameless and shameless writer is by no means entitled to be considered as the representative, of all participation in his crime, it is a fact, nevertheless, that the quarterly reviewer has made upon missions a very serious and bitter attack. It is true, indeed, that the only efforts to which he specifically refers are those of the baptist missionaries at Serampore, whose high character and extensive usefulness have doubtless gained for them an honourable pre-eminence in his hatred; but it is manifest that others are equally involved in the charges adduced, since the great principles upon which the baptist missionaries have acted are common to all, without excepting the church missionary society itself. The case, therefore, is one of common interest; all parties should be aroused as to a common danger, and united to repel a common enemy. If such an attack as this should succeed in injuring a single mission, it will tend to establish principles, and generate feelings, destructive to every similar exertion in the world.

Nor is the assault less deadly in its aim than we have



represented it. It is tempered, indeed, with a little, and but a little, apparent candour. "It is impossible," says the reviewer, "that there should be any difference of opinion as to the object" of the baptist missions to the east; "and we think there should be none," he adds, "as to the single-hearted zeal with which it has been pursued."\* The "labours and sacrifices" of the missionaries are further "noticed as most extraordinary and meritorious." But meritorious of what? we ask, if it be true, as this writer asserts, not only that they have issued in "failure;" but that the missionaries have not "been pursuing the right path to effect their object;"† that with "a great want of discretion, or something worse, they send forth hasty and imperfect translations of the scriptures, before they have acquired a competent knowledge of the languages in which they write, so that their labours are simply useless, if not pernicious to those for whom they are intended;"‡ that "the versions abound with glaring mistakes, which render them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives, and that, by words mis-spelt, misplaced, or misemployed, the sense of the original is sometimes totally changed;"§ that they adopt the "system of principally attempting to convert, and connecting themselves almost exclusively with the very dregs of the people;"|| and that, finally, of their converts, "two-thirds are pariahs, or beggars, and the rest composed of sudras, or vagrants, and outcasts of several tribes, who, being without resource, turned christians in order to form new connexions, chiefly for the purpose of marriage, or with some other interested views, those who remain christians being the very worst of the flock."¶ Yet these are the things which this reviewer gravely, and not dubiously, asserts; and if they are true, whatever "single hearted zeal" and "extraordinary sacrifices" have been expended in such labours and results, the missionaries are certainly in no small degree meritorious of public abandon-

\* P. 38.

§ Ibid.

† Ibid.

|| P. 39.

‡ Ibid.

¶ P. 40.



ment, we might say, indignation, unless indeed commiseration should take place of so severe, but otherwise so justifiable an emotion. But ARE THESE THINGS TRUE? This is a question which the public, as well as missionary societies, will feel to be of the deepest importance; and it is one which we are anxious to have thoroughly examined. We have no wish for concealment. If the existing missions are not worthy of support, let the world know it, and abandon them. But if on the contrary, it shall be found that the accusations are false, and by being needlessly false give reason to suppose them malicious, it cannot be too much to expect that public execration shall fall on the head of the traducer, and the innocent objects of his attack escape unhurt from so deadly a blow.

On the part of the friends of missions, it will readily be admitted that such allegations as these are strongly adapted to arouse indignation, and to compel defence; yet they might perhaps be passed by, were it not for the pretensions of the work in which they appear. If the Quarterly Review were notoriously ignorant, or avowedly irreligious, or systematically hostile to missionary undertakings, its character might afford a sufficient antidote to its tendency. But we are quite sensible that the case is far otherwise. Notwithstanding all our differences from it, we do justice with pleasure to its literary eminence, and acknowledge with yet greater pleasure the good service it has rendered, both to the cause of religion in general, and that of missions in particular. These very excellencies, however, aggravate its powers of mischief. Had this journal never appeared our friend, we should have the less cause to regard its hostility. The public mind would yield little to its opinions, were it not for the influence acquired by the semblance of wisdom and good feeling.

It is the more necessary to come forward, because of the insidious nature of the assault, and of the too probable systematic adoption of this mode of warfare. A cursory observer



of the recent number would have no suspicion that it contained any thing of this kind; but if he thinks it worth while to enter on the review of Mrs. Judson's Account of the American Mission to the Burmans, he there finds this disguised attack upon the baptist missions in the east. The poison is infused in the manner least adapted to attract attention, or to excite alarm. The reviewer has just "a few words" to say in passing, nothing of sufficient consequence or prominence to deserve notice; something on the contrary, so brief, trivial, and accidental, as to preclude the opportunity of an answer, without subjecting ourselves to the imputation of ridiculously magnifying trifles: and then he takes the opportunity of pouring forth concentrated venom, because he imagines either that he is not watched, or that he cannot be counteracted. Under an idea that he is not professedly engaged in controversy, he feels no necessity for examining documents, or for adducing proofs, or for confining himself within the bounds of truth. He seems to revel in the luxurious license of saying whatever he pleases, and of insinuating what, even under such favourable circumstances, he dares not say. We should have some respect for a manly assailant, who would let us know of his coming, and grapple fairly with the facts of our case; but this is a reptile adversary, who, as though conscious of the littleness of his powers, but not willing to forego the gratification of his malice, can do nothing more characteristic of himself or of his cause, than slyly to approach and bite us from behind. Nor is it the only time he has done so. The fifty-eighth number of this journal\* contains about an equal quantity of similar matter, in the review of Sir John Malcolm's Memoir of Central India; and from the similarity of style and sentiment, together with the implicit confidence placed in the abbé Dubois, from whom the same quotation is made which is found in the present article, little doubt can be entertained of its having been written by the same hand—a

\* Vol. xxx. p. 409—413.



fact which we shall take the liberty to assume. It appears, therefore, that the Quarterly Review has in its pay a writer who, bitterly hating christian missions, but afraid to attack them openly, is lying in wait for opportunities of depreciating them by sly and wary calumny. Judging from the two specimens before us, his stock of this article is small; but it seems each item is to be repeated at intervals, supported by the same authorities, and the literal repetition of the same quotations; the viper judging rightly, that if he makes any considerable impression, it must be not so much by the force of his tooth, as by the frequency of its application. The only difference in these assaults is, that the last is the more daring of the two, an indication of what we may expect, if his endeavours are totally disregarded.

It is, indeed, high time that the Quarterly Review should cease to be considered oracular on the subject of christian missions. This writer is utterly incapable of conceiving their true character, and of estimating their importance. He seems to think that there is no darkness resting on the future condition of the heathen, and is almost petrified by the "calvinistic" supposition that the pagans, ("excellent" people,) either of past or present generations, are less happy in this respect than christians.\* It is not for us at present to discuss this point, or to remind our readers how different are the representations of holy writ, but it is obvious that upon this hypothesis the grand motive to missionary exertion is annihilated. If the everlasting salvation of men is not connected with the dissemination of the gospel, then the object is not worth a tythe of the money, the labour, and the lives, that are consumed in its promotion. With this reviewer, therefore, the friends of missions can have no sympathy, nor can they look with any respect on his counsels or his views, which, to say the truth, are quite worthy of the pagan and antichristian principle on which he sets out. He thinks it much wiser to teach geography than to circulate the scrip-

\* Q. R. lxx. Pp. 42, 43.



tures, and much more important in the first place to say, "that mount Meru is not 20,000 miles high," than "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."\* He conceives that there is no chance of making converts to christianity without a pompous ceremonial and splendid rites,† and that the doctrine of Boudh, but more especially the sound of an organ,‡ is much more intelligible than the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah.§ He is totally blind to the nature of true religion, which he seems to identify with the existence of national establishments, and thinks any result short of this convicts the missionaries both of folly and a failure. On this ground he cherishes no equivocal par-

\* P. 41.

† "The humble character which the teachers of the gospel assume," "is decidedly injudicious" "among a people exceedingly influenced by pomp and splendour."—Q. R. lxx. pp. 39, 42.

‡ "It might not probably be found injudicious, to erect small but suitable chapels at every residency, with a *good organ* in each, and solemn music to allure the nations to attend; it might happen that some who "went to scoff," would "remain to pray."—Review, lviii. p. 412.

§ "All the day long" the missionary "says to the passers by, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Now this, we confess, does appear to us to be silly enough; and we would seriously ask Mr. Judson, whether he really expected that these 'passers by,' could, by any human possibility, have the least comprehension of this beautiful metaphor? and whether, taking it literally, (the only way in which they could take it,) he could blame the poor Burmans for laughing in his face, and looking upon him as one who had either taken leave of his senses, or one who was playing the fool with themselves?" Q. R. lxx. p. 42. We have been used to think that the eastern nations are eminently addicted to the use of metaphorical language; and moreover that the word of God is adapted to all ages and all countries; but now it seems that a missionary cannot quote one of the simplest of gospel invitations, without being supposed to be "playing the fool," and to have "taken leave of his senses." But this is not all: the reviewer "apprehends," and seems to believe, that the missionary "in the present instance, was very far from" "using national images," there being no such thing as water, nor thirst, in Burmah; from "explaining the drift of his parable;" and even from "speaking intelligibly, or in the vernacular tongue!" p. 42. Our readers will probably think this too silly; and though we would be far from such cruelty if we thought he had "taken leave of his senses," yet since the reviewer seems to be very condescendingly "playing the fool" for our amusement, he will not blame us if we in our turn "laugh in his face."



tiality for popery, which he thinks admirably adapted to extend christianity in the hands of the Franciscan and the Dominican friars, but most of all in those of the Jesuits, whose failure seems not a little to stumble his faith as to the universal diffusion of this religion at all.\* He sees no difference of any consequence between popery and protestantism; he knows of no other means or principles which can be brought to bear on the heart of man than those which were employed by the Jesuits, and is so completely fascinated with the pomp and splendour, the wealth and pride of that magnificent hierarchy, that, although he must know they allow no salvation out of their own pale, he recommends them to calvinists as a pattern of christian charity.† So easily is he

\* "The Jesuits certainly contrived to manage these matters better." "If any man could hope to succeed in making converts to the christian faith, it was the mild and unpretending abbé Dubois." "He lived *as* the natives, and *with* them, and submitted to every restraint and privation; in a word, he adopted the usages and prejudices of the inhabitants, as the early Jesuits were accustomed to do, in order to forward the views of his mission." "The Roman catholic ritual would appear to be that of all others best calculated to make an impression, and to gain proselytes. [Compare this by the way with the following annunciation from the same oracular source. "The QUAKERS (!) are of all people best adapted to spread christianity among the heathen." Quarterly Review, vol. i. p. 222.] It has, as the Abbé well observes, a poorga or sacrifice; it has processions, images, statues, *tirtan*, (or holy water,) fasts, *tittys*, (or feasts,) prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, &c. all which practices bear more or less resemblance to those in use among the Hindoos." Review, lviii. pp. 410, 411, 412. So then, to convert the Hindoos to christianity, the abbé abandoned christianity for Hindooism, and attempted to supersede one system of idolatry by introducing another. "Yet it failed altogether." "This failure is the more extraordinary, as in all the above mentioned countries the ceremonials of religion bear a most striking resemblance to those of the church of Rome; so like indeed are their devotional exercises, that one of the catholic missionaries says the devil must have got the start of the Jesuits, and suggested them." lxx. pp. 41, 42. "What chance then have the evangelical missionaries?" says the reviewer, (lviii. p. 411.) not having the benefit, we suppose, of such a forerunner, to suggest resemblances which they may "turn to their advantage." Yet it is asserted, on the same authority, that "the Hindoos may be more easily converted than any nation in the world, except the Hot-tentots!" Quarterly Review, vol. i. p. 213.

† Q. R. lxx. p. 43.



imposed upon, that he is led implicitly by the abbé Dubois;\* and so copious in his inquiries, so resolved to know the truth, that he betrays scarcely a symptom of having referred to any other authority. Nor is he less ignorant than superficial and absurd. He thinks that all baptists are calvinists, and besides them he does not know that there are any missionaries in India, or any calvinists in christendom.† He dreams that the institution of schools for the instruction of the rising generation, especially in the upper ranks of life, has been neglected by the missionaries at Serampore;‡ when all the world besides himself knows that these very men were the first to open this line of exertion; that they established many schools for the native children; that they projected a college for youth of the higher ranks; and that they originated the impulse of the public mind in India, under which all classes are now vigorously acting, and of which the church of England is at length availing itself. To finish the sketch of this eminent writer on missions, it may be added, that in full proportion to his absurdity and ignorance, are his rashness and audacity. He tells you untruths with the utmost naiveté, and brings groundless accusations as though sustained by proof from holy writ. But we forbear; the facts will appear immediately. We ask only, whether a writer like this is qualified to direct public opinion on the subject of christian missions? Whether it is to him that the friends of these admirable institutions will look for wise counsel, or just representation? Let him rather be set down as an enemy to the cause, and the worst of enemies, one never hereafter to be trusted, because he has assumed the disguise of a friend. Let it be a settled point that no-

\* For the true character of this writer, whom the quarterly reviewer seems afraid to expose to critical examination, we refer our readers to the following works: A Reply to the Letters of the Abbé Dubois, by the Rev. James Hough, Chaplain to the Honourable East India Company: An Answer to the Abbé Dubois, by Henry Townley, Missionary to Bengal: and the Eclectic Review for October and November, 1823, and July, 1824.

† Q. R. lxx. p. 42.

‡ Q. R. lxx. p. 41.



thing can be received upon his authority, or expected from him but hostility, since his very fondling, like that of the serpent, is but designed to secure an opportunity of aiming a more deadly wound. Such a state of the public mind, if it should not break his tooth, will at least make innocent its poison.

But let us come to particulars, and examine the allegations brought against the baptist missionaries in the east.

In the first place we are told that their labours have resulted in "failure."\* We confess ourselves rather at a loss to know what this reviewer would understand by success. We have a suspicion that what we should consider as an eminent degree of success, he would regard as a failure still. Nothing probably would satisfy him but a splendid church establishment, for which we acknowledge our system affords no capabilities, and we have no desire. The success we wish is altogether independent of any such result, nor have any measures conducive to it ever been taken; and however difficult this reviewer and some other persons may find it to believe us sincere in this profession, we conceive that, upon the supposition of our sincerity, it is one for which no churchman will be angry with us. There can be no rivalry, and there need be no jealousy. Whatever may be the fruits of our labour, they will in no measure pre-occupy India as the site of an ecclesiastical establishment, or forestal the rich harvest of church patronage. But, admitting this, it by no means follows that the baptist missions in the east have been unsuccessful. The success of a mission lies essentially in two things: first, in the actual conversion of men to christianity; secondly, in the establishment of well adapted and effective means for the conversion of others. The former is immediate success, the latter is remote, but it is not therefore unreal or illusory. However this reviewer may prefer Pin-nock's Geography to the bible, it is true, nevertheless, that

\* Q. R. lxx. p. 38.



“the word of God is quick and powerful,” characterized by a living and unfailing energy, as well as a divine adaptation to the moral state of mankind. Were nothing effected by a mission but a translation of the scriptures, it could not be described as a failure; for one of the grand and instituted means of enlightening and converting the world would have been put into operation, and enough therefore would have been done to give hope and promise of ultimate usefulness. But much more than this may be done, without supposing even a single convert. The institution of schools for the communication of elementary knowledge, as the reviewer himself will admit, for we have his own authority for the assertion, will do great things; according to him, indeed, more than even the scriptures. Nor is it possible that what is done in this way should ever be lost. A person once emancipated never returns to the belief of ghosts and goblins. The understanding once enlightened does not relapse under the dominion of absurdities. The dawn of knowledge is like that of the day, of certain progress and increasing brightness. A stimulus is thus given which continues to operate after its cause has ceased, augmenting itself by its own action, and acting more powerfully by means of every augmentation. If the popish missionaries had instituted schools and faithfully translated the scriptures,\* if they had applied themselves to the emancipation of the mind and the improvement of the heart, their labours would not have been fruitless. The baptist missionaries in the east have done these things, and even if no results could as yet be found, it might be affirmed that they had conducted an effective and successful mission. They have put into vigorous activity the most direct and powerful means of usefulness, and it is impossible they can be in vain. But even if it were possible, it is

\* “The Jesuits cautiously abstained from translating such portions of the scriptures as they knew would be injurious to their cause.” That is, they omitted every thing respecting sacrifices for sin, and translated the battle between David and Goliath! Review, lviii. p. 412.



far too soon to affirm it. The period through which the efficacy of these means is to be tried is not yet elapsed; it is scarcely begun. The ages to come present the scope for their operation, the field in which the harvest shall be gathered. To say *yet* that any mission has failed, is to assume an insight into futurity to which no man is entitled; or in looking into it, it is to contradict all known principles and experience. It is to say that the rising of the sun is a failure, because he is seen struggling with the clouds which skirt the horizon. It is to say that the cultivation of the earth is a failure, because the harvest does not supersede the inclemency and the labours of the seed time. If an agricultural mission were sent to some desert land, and in the space of a few weeks after the commencement of its labours an inquiry were to be made into its success, would any man in his senses announce it to be a failure, because the earth was not covered with a golden crop? Surely not. He would say the mission had succeeded, if he found the forests felled, the ground broken up, and well prepared for the seed; but more especially if he learned that the seed itself had been cast in, or saw the blade actually springing from the unwonted soil. Let the success of the baptist missionaries in the east be thus estimated, and we are content. How well they have done it we shall consider afterwards, but they have in fact translated the scriptures, not into one language, but many; and many thousand copies have been circulated in the several countries in which these languages are spoken: they have instituted schools for instructing gratuitously the children of the poor, and have actually instructed many thousands of them; while their labours have been the primary cause of producing such a change in public opinion and feeling, as promises to give birth to the most extensive and beneficial effects. They have been there yet but three and thirty years, and had long to labour in clearing and breaking up the ground; they found opportunity at length to cast in the seed; they have cherished an assurance that their endeavours could not be in vain; and



(to say nothing of a single convert) they see the result of them, both in the prosperity of their own schools and the beneficial circulation of their own translations, in the numerous other persons now employed all around them in similar labours, in the multiplied openings for usefulness, and in the growing activity of the public mind. The seed is springing up luxuriantly, and no man doubts a harvest, but this sagacious reviewer, who, yet more alienated in his heart than remote in his position, coolly pronounces it a failure.

But these missions are by no means destitute of *immediate* success. It is true, indeed, all India is not become christian, nor is the population converted by millions. But converts have been made. And if the accounts of this kind which have been presented to the public make but little show, it is both because the missionaries have been desirous to avoid ostentation, and because they proceed on principles which separate the chaff from the wheat. Were the national religions of India to be superseded by a christian church establishment, we are aware that its members, and probably its successes, would be reckoned by millions; but, without expressing our own sentiments further, it is quite obvious that this would be only nominal christianity. Of the value of such christianity there may be different opinions, with which at present we shall not interfere; we have only to say that we esteem it rather mischievous than beneficial, and wholly renounce it. The baptist missionaries carry this point even beyond their fellow labourers of all other denominations, since they do not baptize, or regard as christian population, the children of professed and apparent converts. If therefore those of whom we speak as converts are few in number, it is in part because the term is employed with great discrimination. The most careful winnowing undoubtedly leaves a portion of chaff among the wheat, but the sample is of much better quality than it would be without such attention; and if it is but few converts that we hear of, it is satisfactory to be able to think them sincere.



Bearing in mind the discrimination with which the term is applied, the number of native converts in the baptist missions to the east is by no means inconsiderable. The abbé Dubois states his at three hundred. In about an equal term of years, those at the baptist missions may be computed at four or five times the number, certainly more than a thousand. For those who know how to estimate the value of immortal souls, this is a most cheering and animating thought; but it is one with which the reviewer has so little sympathy, that it does nothing to redeem the missions from being exhibited as a failure.

They may still deserve this appellation, however, if he has correctly shewn "what sort of converts are made in India." If they are converted from bad to worse, or are no better for the change, it had been wiser to leave them as they were. Upon this topic the reviewer quotes the abbé Dubois, who says that his converts were persons, "who, being without resource, turned christians in order to form new connexions, chiefly for the purpose of marriage, or with some other interested views;" and, he adds, "I am verily ashamed that the resolution I have taken to declare the whole truth on this subject forces me to make the humiliating avowal, that those who continued christians are the very worst among my flock." Now there can be no objection at all to receive the testimony of "this honest catholic" to the character of his own converts; but we cannot see on what principle his description is to be applied to those of other missions. There might be some justice, perhaps, in transferring it to missions of a similar kind, namely, popish ones, for like causes produce like effects; but all protestant missionaries, we suppose, proceed upon totally different principles. The baptist missionaries have never reckoned men converts by virtue of their submission to a ceremony, or their acknowledgment of priestly authority; nor have they held out any of those allurements, of the influence of which the abbé so bitterly complains; nor have they suffered any, whom they knew to be bad men, to continue in their flock. On the contrary, as they consider no man a

christian who does not give evidence of a godly life, so with them the profession of christianity by the natives has frequently been connected with great sacrifices, while the purity of the flock has been carefully preserved by the discipline of reproof or excommunication. Respecting the converts of such a mission, the abbé Dubois is obviously unqualified to speak. At all events, it is certain that the baptist missionaries have never made any such humiliating confession. As honest as this mortified papist, and more ready to declare the whole truth, they have told the public repeatedly of what sort their converts are; and why the reviewer has brought forward the testimony of a man, who, however honest, must necessarily be ignorant on this point, instead of referring to some of the accredited publications of the missionaries themselves, it is difficult to say, unless it were that he was determined to defame them, and reckless of the means. From one of these publications we beg to lay before our readers a brief sketch of one of their converts, now deceased.

“ Krishna Prisada was enabled to appreciate the value of the christian system. He admired its doctrines. The doctrine of the fall, of the divinity of Christ, of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and of our complete salvation on the reception of Christ, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; these doctrines were cordially received by him as the foundation principles of the gospel. Not only by his words did he confess Christ before the brahmins, (himself a brahmin) but his christian walk confirmed his testimony that his profession was genuine. He possessed tenderness of conscience, among a people who make sin their play-thing, and among whom this sentiment is universal, that sin is the play of the gods. He regarded truth, amongst a nation of liars, whose very gods were liars, and whose shastras, in certain cases, declare the innocence of lying. He was a man of integrity, amongst a nation who value themselves on their dexterity in the arts of deception and fraud. Divine grace thus changed his nature and his habits, and enabled



him to make head against sin, which runs through the plains of Bengal like a mighty torrent.”\*

If the converts made in India are such as these, the missions to that country are not a failure. Their immediate success, though not commensurate with our wishes, is unequivocal and gratifying. And the prospect of their remote success is thus greatly extended. For if good may be anticipated from the diffusion of knowledge and of the word of God, much more may it be expected from the character and activity of christians themselves. They are emphatically declared to be the light of the world. They shine as lights in a dark place, holding forth the word of life. Every christian becomes an instrument of promoting christianity, and some of the native converts have been rendered eminently conducive to this end, by zealous and well directed efforts for the instruction of their countrymen. A leaven is thus infused into the mass, which will continue to work till the whole is leavened; and the time may be anticipated—were any calamity to produce such a result, we should not doubt its being now come—when the diffusion of christianity would triumphantly go forward, were every European christian expelled from the eastern world.

But we have certainly been taking unnecessary pains; for we find ample testimony to the point under consideration, from a quarter which our antagonist, and all the readers of the *Quarterly Review*, will undoubtedly consider as possessing the highest authority.

“In fourteen years (this was written in 1809) these missionaries have done more towards spreading the knowledge of the scriptures among the heathen, than has been accomplished or even attempted by all the world besides. A plain statement of the fact will be the best proof of their diligence and success. The first convert was baptized in December,

\* *Memoirs of Four Christian Hindoos. By the Serampore Missionaries.* pp. 94, 95, 100, 70, 72.

1809, [1799] and in seven years from that time has the number amounted to 109, of whom nine were afterwards excluded, or suspended, or had been lost sight of. Carey and his son have been in Bengal fourteen years, the other brethren only nine; they had all a difficult language to acquire before they could speak to a native, and to preach and argue in it required a thorough and familiar knowledge. Under these circumstances the wonder is not that they have done so little, but that they have done so much; for it will be found that, without this difficulty to retard them, no religious opinions have spread more rapidly in the same time, unless there was some remarkable folly or extravagance to recommend them, or some powerful worldly inducement. Their progress will be continually accelerating; the difficulty is at first, as in introducing vaccination into a distant land; when the matter has once taken, one subject supplies infection for all around him, and the disease takes root in the country. The husband converts the wife, the son converts the parent, the friend his friend, and every fresh proselyte becomes a missionary in his own neighbourhood. Thus their sphere of influence and of action widens, and the eventual issue of a struggle between truth and falsehood is not to be doubted.”\*

The lapse of seventeen years since this testimony was borne, has only furnished ample verifications of it. And if, upon such undeniable authority, the public may be satisfied of the success of the missionaries in the east, they may be assured also that the measures they have adopted are not deficient in wisdom. Indeed we have particular pleasure in concluding this department of our labours with a declaration from the same high quarter, quite as applicable now as it was seventeen years ago, that “the plan which they have laid down for their proceedings is perfectly prudent and unexceptionable.”†

The reviewer is guilty of a direct, we hope an unintention-

\* Q. R. vol. i. p. 225.

† Ibid.



tional falsehood, in asserting that the baptist missionaries in the east adopt the "system of principally attempting to convert, and connecting themselves almost exclusively with, the very dregs of the people."\* Upon any known principles of our nature, good or bad, this is utterly incredible; and it is false in fact. The missionaries are undoubtedly happy in embracing opportunities of instructing the poor and the outcast, as well as others. This reviewer, it seems, would have them abandoned altogether, as "unfitted to comprehend the divine mysteries of the gospel," and as "throwing an impediment in the way of an introduction to the higher orders." Perhaps he thinks, too, that the souls of the "uneducated rabble" are of no value. But there are those who differ from him in these fundamental articles of this right royal religion. The missionaries doubtless think, and many think with them, "that the redemption of the soul" of the meanest "is precious;" that the things which are hidden from the wise and prudent, under divine teaching, are easily understood by babes; and that if the higher orders will condescend to accept no salvation but one from which, as from their wealth and honours, the poor are excluded, they must not be allowed to shut others out of the kingdom of heaven, however they may choose to exclude themselves. After all it is most certain that the missionaries do every thing in their power to engage the attention of all classes of men, and that they are supported in a style of life not adapted to bring them into contempt. If among their hearers or converts are found few learned, or mighty, or noble, with many of the poor and outcast, it is not because the latter have been sought, but because the former have refused; and instead of finding fault with them for instructing those whom they can gain, the reviewer would have done better to admonish those whom they cannot. No men will be more thankful to him, if he will point out to them a more easy and effectual method

\* Q. R. lxx. p. 39.

of awakening the consciences and engaging the hearts of the great men of this world. But the case is not altogether such as he has represented it. The abbé Dubois, indeed, his favourite guide, acknowledges that of his three hundred converts, "two thirds were pariahs, or beggars, and *all the rest* sudras, or vagrants, and outcasts of different tribes." The reason of this is obvious. It is not that "this honest catholic" can be thought guilty "of principally attempting to convert, and [voluntarily] associating himself almost exclusively with, the very dregs of the people." Popery has shewn itself too fond of the high places of the earth, to be suspected of such heretical modesty. But the abbé held out allurements which beggars, vagrants, and outcasts found very enticing, while he exhibited no motive strong enough to induce any man to break an honourable caste, or to make a single sacrifice for christianity. The baptist missionaries have asserted not only different, but contrary things. Of their converts, many are of the respectable castes, and not a few of the brahminical, which is the highest; while the instances are not rare, in which the renunciation of caste, and the profession of christianity, have been attended with such difficulties and privations, as unequivocally indicated both the sincerity and the force of the motives under which they acted.

For this supposed systematical preference of the lower orders, the reviewer thinks "the baptist missionaries will quote the example of our Saviour and his apostles."\* But he is mistaken. They will plead no example for what they do not practise; and still less that of our Saviour and his apostles for what

\* "The baptist missionaries will quote the example of our Saviour and his apostles, and appeal to the successful agency of humble instruments, among the lower orders, in the first amazing spread of Christianity through the Roman empire. Comparisons of this sort are often fallacious—the missionaries forget the miraculous powers and the extraordinary divine assistances which can alone account for the first progress of our religion, but which it has pleased God to deny to the preachers of the gospel in these days. Yet we might urge, that it was not until the conversion of Constantine that polytheism received its death blow in Europe." Q. R. lxx. p. 40.



was not practised by them. But that men of "humble character" may do much good, and religion spread when the higher orders discountenance it, is quite manifest from an appeal to the first propagation of christianity. We do not forget the extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers of that age, nor do we lay claim to any participation in them; but we entertain the fullest conviction that they were perpetuated as long as there was any valuable end to be answered by them. At all events, we cannot agree with the reviewer in the opinion, that the withdrawment of miraculous powers was the signal for the cessation of the triumphs of the gospel, or that the achievement of its final and most glorious conquests is to be transferred from the antiquated instrumentality of supernatural endowments, to the more modern and approved method of splendid dresses, pealing organs, pompous processions, and magnificent rites. It is generally supposed that christianity has yet many victories to win; and one would think that the failure of the popish priesthood, which is more magnificent and imposing than any other called christian, might satisfy even the highest churchman that little can be expected from a gorgeous ritual. We, for our part, look to the enlightening and renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone, amidst all the conviction flashed on gainsayers by primitive miracles, wrought the saving wonders of the early age, and which is promised to attend, not splendid ceremonies, but the ministry of the word of God, to the end of the world. We by no means undervalue the operation and influence of the higher orders. We should hail with delight a literal fulfilment of the prophecy, that kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the church; but as there seems at present little reason to expect this, so it is delightful to know that the spread of the gospel is altogether independent of them. It is not true, as the reviewer intimates, that every great change in society must begin with the superior classes, an opinion which betrays more absurdity of theory, and ignorance of fact, than could have been supposed

to result even from high tory principles. We maintain, on the other hand, that the influence of the two portions of society is mutual, and that changes which are extensively wrought in either become powerfully felt in the other. If princes and great men will not forward the triumphs of christianity, neither shall they obstruct them. If they will not lead, they shall be impelled. Nor are we by any means sure that the withholding of their influence is so much to be regretted. They have such a propensity to subject religion to secular authority, to enforce it by temporal sanctions, and to introduce into it their own inventions, that some mischief is almost sure to result from their interference with it. The conversion of Constantine, so far from exterminating paganism, was rather the means of transferring it in a mass into christianity, and contributed more than any other event to the perpetuity of the errors and vices which it is so fondly imagined to have destroyed. Of this, at all events, we entertain the most cheering persuasion, that if it shall be said of the latest triumphs of christianity, as it was of its earliest, "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble" are employed in them; it shall be added too, that it is because "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and things that are despised, yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are."

The reviewer brings yet another accusation against the baptist missionaries in the east. They have issued, it seems, "hasty," and therefore "useless," and even "pernicious" translations of the scriptures.\* In making this attack, he has certainly shewn no want of courage. This is touching a point in which the Serampore missionaries have long been acknowledged to be illustrious, by men of the highest rank, character, and learning, of all parties.

\* Q. R. lxx. p. 38.



Of late, indeed, a few persons, (not learned persons, however,) have thought proper to exclude themselves from the honour of sympathizing in the general eulogy, and among these our reviewer has certainly entitled himself to a bad pre-eminence. His assertions are not only, like the rest, ignorant and groundless, but they are actually more silly and audacious than them all. For example: "The versions abound with glaring mistakes, which render them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives; and either by mis-spelling, misplacing, or misemploying words, the sense of the original is sometimes totally changed."\* Before we have done with this veracious writer, we shall adduce evidence to shew that this is false in fact; but quite independently of this, there is one consideration from which it will be obvious that it cannot be true. The translations have been effected by the assistance of learned natives of the countries in which the respective languages were spoken, by whom, in fact, as far as the diction is concerned, the ideas conveyed to them by the missionaries have been transfused, each into his own tongue. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that there *can* be no mis-spelling, misplacing or misemploying of words, nor any mistakes adapted to render the scriptures absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives. To believe this, would require us to believe, also, that learned men in the east do not know how to use, to manage, or even to spell their own language, or to convey their ideas without appearing absurd or ridiculous to their countrymen. It may be doubtful whether the native translator correctly receives and faithfully transfers the sentiments intended to be conveyed to him, but there can be no error in any other point, that is to say, not in any of the points which this sagacious reviewer has selected for his attack.

Let us now examine the proofs—for such charges are too serious to be adduced without at least a shew of proof—by

\* Q. R. lxx. p. 38.

which he endeavours to fortify his position. "Of this kind," says he, "several instances are pointed out by the abbé Dubois." He is verily remarkably fond of "this honest catholic," with whose loathing of missions one must suppose he has a powerful sympathy. But what will our readers say when we tell them, that he has been obliged to pervert and to falsify, even the false and perverted statements of the abbé himself? The abbé Dubois adduces no instance from any translation executed by the missionaries at Serampore, of whom exclusively the reviewer is here speaking; nor from any translation that had ever been given to the world, or that was considered fit to be so by the author himself; but only from a few chapters, circulated privately for the sake of critical emendation and remark. So much, therefore, for the "honest catholic," and the reviewer's dishonest use of him. Next for the testimony of Dr. Carey himself, who, it seems, "has candidly admitted that, while he imagined his writings, preachings, and conversations, were all working well, he discovered with sorrow that the persons to whom they were addressed, had either wholly mistaken their meaning, or retained no recollection of their substance." The extreme relevancy of this admission is really surprising. It is to prove that the translations of the Scriptures are of a certain character; and here accordingly are introduced the "writings, preachings, and conversations" of Dr. Carey. It is to shew that the scriptures as translated at Serampore, contain words "mis-spelt, misplaced, misemployed," and "mistakes, which render them absurd, or ridiculous to the natives;" all which, of course, is most conclusively established by their "mistaking the meaning, and retaining no recollection of the substance." This is very well; only let the reviewer look to himself. For if a reader's retaining no recollection of the substance of a book, or mistaking its meaning, be proof of its author mis-spelling, misplacing, and misemploying words, and committing such glaring mistakes as to become absurd or ridiculous, to say nothing of



the English bible and many other good books we could name, we really fear (though we shudder to say it) that all these things may be charged on the Quarterly Review itself. The candid admission of Dr. Carey is such as every minister of the gospel, and every other man who, by his writings or otherwise, endeavours to communicate instruction, will find cause to make; and it is most certain that it is one which he never intended to refer to the accuracy or intelligibility of the scriptural translations.

Upon this subject, Dr. Carey and his coadjutors have emphatically declared the contrary, and in the ninth memoir of the translations have adduced satisfactory evidence of their assertion. Here are the testimonies of men to whom the several languages are familiar, not indeed to the accuracy with which the sentiments of the bible are transfused, a subject of which they could have no knowledge; but to the correctness, propriety, and intelligibility of the language itself, a point on which their testimony is decisive, and that on which the attack of the reviewer is directed. The following may sufficiently evince the tenor of these documents, which refer specifically to eighteen of the translations.

THE SUNGSKRIT. *The testimony of Ram-nath Vachusputee, chief Pundit of the College of Fort-William.*—"I have read the part of the holy book which you have sent me. The Sungskrit is perfectly correct. There are two or three trivial mistakes in the printing, but *there is no fault in the language and diction.*"

THE GOOJURATEE. *The testimony of Haloojee, Goojuratee Pundit in the College of Fort William.*—"I have examined the book, respecting which you have made inquiry of me. *The language is correct*; if you doubt, let the book be sent to Goojurat; *the people there will all understand it.* The only places in which they will find any difficulty, will be those which contain the names of men and places."

THE ASSAMEE. *The testimony of three Assamee Brahmins, studying at Nudeeya.*—"We have received the speci-

mens of the Assamee Scriptures which you sent to us. We have read and understood it: *it is excellently done. Whoever of the Assam people shall read this book, will understand it.*"\*

These testimonies the public will know how to weigh against the solitary one adduced by the reviewer,† of "a vakeel attached to one of our corps," who said that there were "some good stories and some bad," which proves that the translation was so correct and idiomatic as to be quite intelligible; that there was "much nonsense," and "much he did not understand," which proves nothing but his ignorance and contempt of the gospel; and finally, that it was "very ill written," a point on which, beyond a doubt, every vakeel attached to our army in India must be infinitely better qualified to decide, than the pundits in the college at Fort William. How glad this reviewer would have been, if the missionaries had sought, or relied upon, such evidence of the contrary!

The reader may now be satisfied to dispose also of the allegation, that "the language" of the translations "is low and vulgar;"‡ an imputation which is just as credible, as that any man of learning should write a book which could be so characterized. We find, however, that the reviewer means nothing more than that it is faithful and plain; for he immediately proceeds to put them in honourable contrast with those of the Jesuits, which, he tells us, "are esteemed among the brahmins as classical works," because they have thrown the simple narratives of scripture into fine passages of "poetry," exciting "universal admiration." And this, we suppose, by way of closely resembling "the majestic simplicity of the original, and of our own excellent translation," from which (according to him) the versions of the missionaries are so deplorably remote.

\* Ninth Memoir respecting the Translations and Editions of the Sacred Scriptures, conducted by the Serampore Missionaries. 1823. Pp. 10, 12, 19.

† Q. R. lviii. p. 411.

‡ Ibid.



It now becomes a very curious question, how the reviewer, not only without evidence, but contrary to evidence, and to the nature of the case itself, could have invented and brought forward such charges? Aware that the art and mystery of reviewing is very profound, we might hesitate to propose a solution of this problem. We venture, however, to suggest, that being determined to cry down the translations, he began not by searching extensively for facts, but by employing his imagination on the very very few with which he happened to be acquainted. Knowing that a large number were announced in a short period, he pronounces them "hasty;" he has logic enough next to conduct him to the conclusion, that a hasty translation is likely to be "imperfect;" and then he divines that the imperfections likely to be found in hasty translations into strange and difficult languages, are "words mis-spelt, misplaced, and mis-employed," together with "glaring mistakes, rendering them absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of natives." And really as an effort of imagination, to say nothing of the profound ratiocination, it is rather creditable to him, though probably suggested by his recollection, perhaps very recent, of the French exercises of his boyhood. But we have not the smallest desire to detract from the merit of his performance; we only request of our readers, that while they yield all due praise to the reviewer, they will do the missionaries the justice to recollect that it is altogether a fiction.

The missionaries, however, "after a very few years application, translated and circulated portions of the scriptures," "in no less than twenty-seven different languages."\* And this is their crime! It is not only the tremendous wickedness, but the vast diversity of the charges brought against these men that surprises us. At one time they are charged with having done too little, at another with having done too much. One man puffs at the seven and twenty translations, and

\* Q. R. lxx. p. 38.



says, the pretended languages are merely dialects; another tells you they are "twenty-seven different languages," and it is impossible there can be any merit in the execution,—they must abound with glaring mistakes, be mis-spelt, and absurd." The reviewer himself is first very angry that the missionaries "are not satisfied, unless the work of an age be compressed into the space of a day;"\* and then yet more angry that "in the space of a day," they seem actually to have done "the work of an age;" while he, poor man, gravely goes about to account for the "failure" of their labours. It is, at least, one consolation beneath this accumulation of obloquy, that all cannot be true; and indeed the contradictoriness of the two parts goes far towards making nugatory the whole, and constraining us to acquiesce with this same Quarterly Review, when in sober seriousness it speaks of the missionaries as having shewn "unequalled learning," and endowed as with "the gift of tongues."† As we have proved, however, that in point of fact, the translations have not the imperfections charged upon them, it may easily be shewn also that their execution, while reflecting great honour on the ability and industry of the missionaries, involves nothing miraculous or unaccountable. The Marquis Wellesley had surrounded himself at Calcutta with learned natives from various provinces of India. Upon his return, and at the very period when the Serampore missionaries were ardently bent upon the translation of the scriptures, these pundits (as they are called) were for the most part disengaged. Instruments for their purpose were thus provided, without expence, difficulty, or delay; a circumstance which not only encouraged them in the labours actually begun or contemplated, but which induced them also to extend their views much farther, namely, to all the languages with which these pundits were conversant as natives. Far from being a project of mere incompetent ambition, the idea of attempting so many versions was never

\* Q. R. lviii. p. 44.

† Vol. I. p. 224.



conceived, till divine providence had presented to them the means by which it was manifest it might be accomplished. And the men were truly fitted for their work; being not only learned in their native tongues, but thoroughly versed in either the Sungskrit, which is the parent of a great number of the eastern dialects, or the Bengalee, or the Hindee, with all which the missionaries had become well acquainted. It is obvious how easily one missionary might convey to any number of such pundits, the import of the sacred scriptures, and the pundits transfuse it into as many different languages in a comparatively short time, without any glaring mistakes, or any thing absurd or ridiculous, or a single word mis-spelt, misplaced, or misemployed. The translations were sure to be idiomatic and correct; it only remained to be certain that they were faithful. For this the pundits could give no security. They might misunderstand the missionaries, or might find no words adequately expressive of the ideas they received. It was provided for, however, by the progress made in the knowledge of these languages by the missionaries themselves, which though it would not have enabled them to make a correct and idiomatic translation, fully qualified them to examine and ascertain the import of every word, and its adaptation to convey the idea of the original. It is thus then, that with talent and industry, great but not super-human, the work has been done, and well done. Or if it be not well done, we challenge a fair and full investigation. The missionary translations are before the world, and there are men of profound learning, able to enter fully into their merits. They would furnish no dishonourable article for the Quarterly Review, though we suspect the present reviewer would find himself incompetent to the task. If, however, it is as he has had the hardihood to assert, it is the duty of the editor to engage a more worthy hand, and to expose, in a manner that shall be satisfactory and convincing, the words mis-spelt, misplaced, and misemployed, together with the total changes of meaning, and



the glaring mistakes that render the scriptures absurd or ridiculous in the eyes of the natives. This, if it be so, is a grievous evil, convicting the missionaries of something much "worse" than a "want of discretion," and the religious world of egregious folly, and a participation in their crime. We are unfeignedly desirous of the extermination of such an evil. We require nothing but a fair trial, and in the mean time only beseech the public not to lend itself to the views of a calumniator. And we are assured they will not. We should be almost ashamed, indeed, of having taken so much notice of these calumnies, did we not know that their influence may be greater than their truth, and that their being unanswered might be construed into a confirmation of them. The enemies of missions, and the bigoted partizans of the establishment, may rejoice even in such poor authority for believing what they wish to be true; and the Quarterly Review itself may not have manliness, or generosity, or integrity enough, to make any amends for this wanton and groundless attack. But with a liberal and discerning public, the rebound will inflict a greater injury on this journal itself, than the blow on the objects of its hostility. And until better evidence has been adduced, than has yet been brought forward in any quarter,\* christian missions in India, of which Serampore is but one, happily associated, however, with many others, which would equally suffer by the attack, and are equally contemplated in the defence, will continue to receive the warm and vigorous support of the religious world. The sound which announces the onset of their foe, will but arouse the courage and the zeal of their friends.

\* Full information respecting the baptist missions in the east, may be found in the works already quoted, in the Periodical Accounts, and Annual Reports of the Baptist Missionary Society; the Memoirs respecting the Translations conducted at Serampore, and Mr. Ward's Farewell Letters: and an excellent reply to the most recent calumnies, in the Eclectic Review for December, 1825, Art. II. p. 382.